



News From Congresswoman Hilda L. Solis 32nd Congressional District of California

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STATEMENT BY CONGRESSWOMAN SOLIS

WASHINGTON, D.C.-*Today, Congresswoman Hilda L. Solis (CA-32), Ranking Member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials, issued the following statement during a press conference celebrating earth day.*

“As we prepare to celebrate Earth Day on Friday, it is appropriate that we are standing in front of this power plant which spews mercury and contributes to the poor air quality in Washington, D.C. Since he first took office in 2001, President Bush’s policies, like this power plant, have hurt our health, worsened our air quality, and destroyed the quality of our drinking water.

“President Bush’s give-away-to-corporate-America environmental policies are pointed attacks on the middle-class. Under the Bush Administration, our nation’s most toxic waste sites are not being cleaned up.

“Last year we learned about four year old Elam, a child living near a superfund site in a poor neighborhood in East Omaha, Nebraska, who will never be the same because he was poisoned by lead from released at the site. I have three of these sites in my district and I know they are not a joke. But, despite four year old Elam and 10 million children under the age of 12 who live near superfund sites across the country, the Bush Administration refuses to make funding for the cleanup of these sites a priority. Worse, President Bush refuses to make polluters pay for the cleanup of these sites at all, and the cleanups that are occurring are being paid for by the taxpayers.

“In addition to risking the health of our neighborhoods by refusing to make cleanup of these toxic waste sites a priority, the Bush Administration’s misguided policies like Clear Skies will worsen our air quality, increasing asthma, bronchitis and lost days at work across the country. Clear Skies creates new loopholes for just about every industrial air polluter, eliminates states’ rights to pursue polluters, and delays attainment of our air quality standards by decades for many communities.

“As a result, the 35,000 cases of asthma in the San Gabriel Valley will increase, and there will be 14,000 more lost days of work and 175 more cases of bronchitis in Los Angeles County. This policy will do nothing to help and everything to harm the over 70 percent of all African Americans and Latinos who live in counties that violate federal air pollution standards.

“The Administration’s air quality policy is worsened by provisions in the energy bill which allow refineries to be sited in nearly any poor and underserved community with no local controls and streamlined public health and environmental regulations.

“In addition, the Administration is yielding safe drinking water standards to the interests of polluters at the Department of Defense. Once again the Administration is seeking to exempt the military from environmental and public health laws, such as those that could be used to stop chemicals like perchlorate (rocket fuel) from polluting public water supplies. If shielding the military from cleanup of its mess isn’t enough, the energy bill also shields the manufacturers of MTBE from the cost of cleanup!

“The MTBE safe harbor provision is a give-away to the Republican Leadership’s fat cat donors who chose to use MTBE despite the actions of California and other states to ban it because it is bad for our water and bad for our health.

“The Bush Administration should be taking steps to protect our health, protect our air quality and ensure safe and reliable drinking water – not giving away our most valuable resources to corporate interests!

“Today we need to ask ourselves if poor health, dirty air and water insecurity is what we want to leave for future generations. I say no! We will continue to fight to make sure future generations are healthy, their air quality is safe and they have a secure supply of drinking water.”

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